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DISCOURSE
Concerning a
GUIDE
IN
Matters of Faith.

With respect, especially, to the ROMISH
Pretence of the necessity of such a
one as is Infallible.



The Second Edition, Corrected.

L O N D O N,

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THE CONTENTS.

C H A P. I.

- T**HE Question, *Whether a Man without Submitting his judgment to an infallible Guide on Earth, may arrive at certainty in matters of Faith.* Page 1.
The Moment of this Question. p. 2.
The Temptations to a belief of the Negative part of it, Sloth and vitious Humility. p. 2.
The Resolution of the Question in six Propositions. P. 3.

C H A P. II.

- Propof. 1. *The True Faith and the Profession of it never failed yet, nor shall it ever fail, in all places.* 4, 5, 6.
Propof. 2. *Wheresoever God requires Faith, he gives means sufficient for the obtaining of it.* 6, 7.
Propof. 3. *Whatsoever those means are, the Act of Assent is ultimately resolved into each Mans reason.* 7, 8.

C H A P. III.

- Propof. 4. *No true reason directeth to an infallible Guide on Earth.* 9.
This is proved by several Considerations.
Confid. 1. *God did not set up such a Guide amongst the Israelites.* 9.

The CONTENTS.

Confid. 2. *God hath no where promised such a Guide to Christians.* 10, 11.

Either directly, 12.

Or by consequence. 13, 14.

Confid. 3. *God hath not given direction for the finding of such a Guide; which he would have done, had he designed the setting of him up.* 14, 15.

C H A P. IV.

Confid. 4. *We cannot find out such a one by the strictest enumeration.* 15.

For, 1. This Guide is not the Church diffusive of the first Ages. 15.

Nor, 2. The Faith of all the Governours of all the Primitive Churches 16.

Nor 3. An Universal or General Council, 16, 17, 18, 19. Which whilst the Reformed deny, they do not assume to themselves such Authority in their Synods. 19.

Nor 4. Is this Guide any present Church pretending to declare the sense of the Churches of former Ages. 20, 21.

Nor 5. The Uniform voice of the present Romish Pastors. 21, 22.

C H A P. V.

Nor 6. Is this Guide the Bishop of Rome. 22.

This is shewed by the following Arguments.

Arg. 1. The Romanists themselves are not at agreement about his Authority 22, 23.

Arg. 2. The infallible Guidance of it is denied in the publick form of the Popes Profession. 23.

Arg. 3. His Plea for this Guidance as Successor of St. Peter, is insufficient. 23, 24.

Arg. 4. The writings of the Popes manifest their Ignorance and Fallibility 24.

Both in lesser matters. 25, 26.

And in Matters of Faith. 26.

Particularly,

The CONTENTS.

Particularly, Pope Vigilius erred in a Matter of Faith

26, 27.

And Pope Honorius

27, 28, 29,

The New-Moulders of this Controversie who make a General Council confirmed by the Papacy to be the Guide, refuted,

29.

Confid. 5. There seems not in the constituting such a Guide either necessity or fitness.

31.

CHAP. VI.

Propos. 5. The Reformed, especially those of the Church of England, refuse not all Ecclesiastical Guidance, though they submit not to any pretended infallible Guide.

32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37.

Nor doth our Church pretend to immediate illumination in Matters of necessary Faith.

37, 38.

Nor doth it exalt private reason to the prejudice of just Authority.

38, 39.

But the Unlearned have more of the just Guidance of Authority in it, than the Church of Rome it self.

39.

CHAP. VII.

Propos. 6. Tho Ecclesiastical Authority is a help of our Faith, yet the Scripture is the only infallible rule of it.

39, 40.

This Proposition is handled in three Assertions.

Assert. 1. A Man, without a papal Guide, may know which are the true Canonical Books.

40, 41.

Assert. 2. He may also find out the necessary Articles of Faith contained in those Books.

41, 42.

The necessary Doctrines are therein contained.

42.

The sense of the words in which they are delivered, may be found out, without submission to such a Guide.

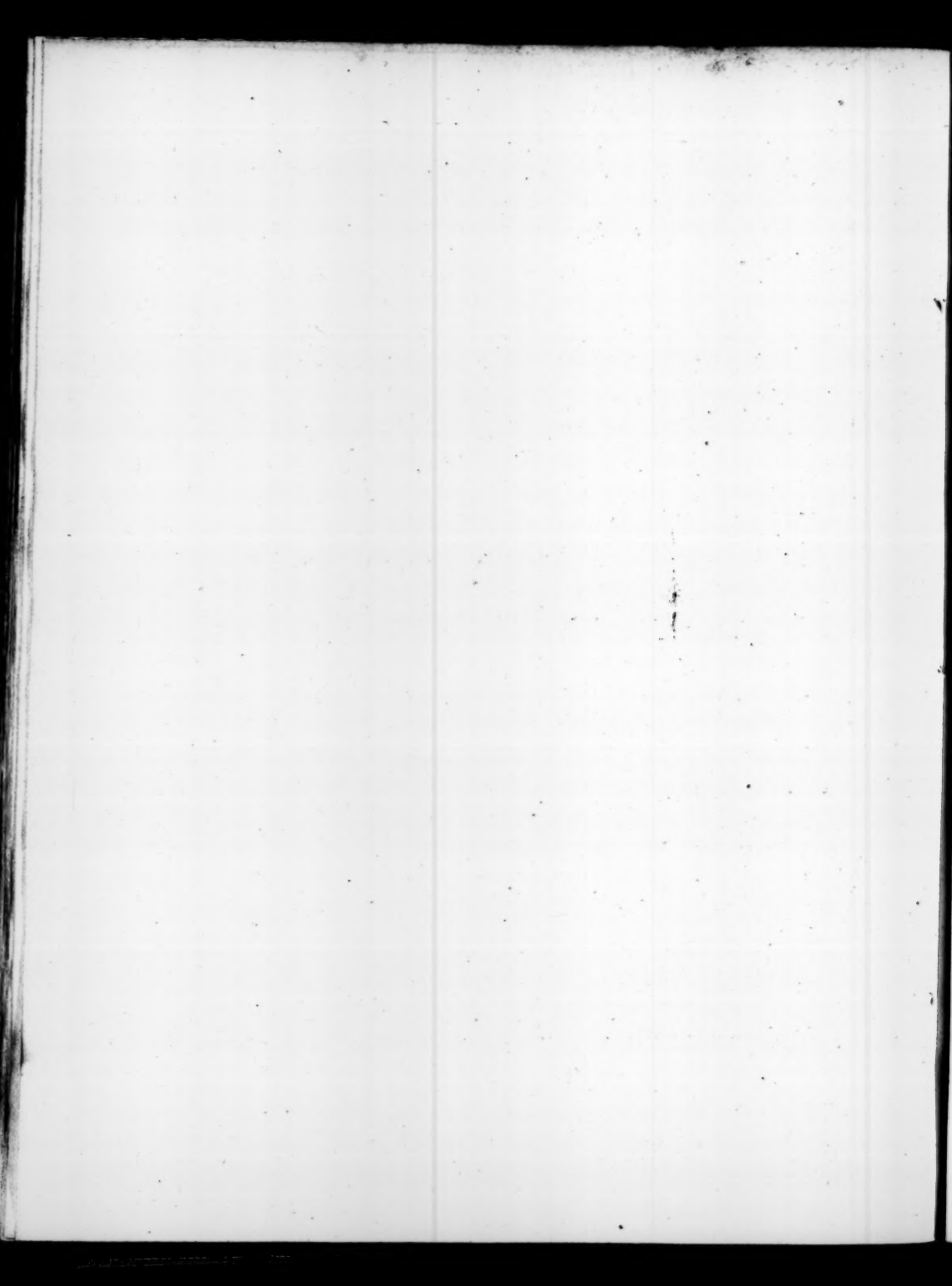
42.

43, 44, 45, 46, 47, &c.

Assert. 3. A submission of our unprejudiced Assent to the Holy Scripture as the Rule of Faith, is the true means to Union in Faith in the Christian Church.

P. 49.

A



I

A
DISCOURSE
Concerning a
GUIDE
IN
Matters of F A I T H.

C H A P. I.

*The Question it self. The Resolution of it in
Six Propositions here named.*

THE design of this Discourse is the Resolution
of the following *Query*.

“ Whether a Man who liveth where Chri-
“ stianity is profess’d, and refuseth to submit his Judg-
“ ment to the Infallibility of any Guide on Earth, and
“ particularly to the Church or Bishop of *Rome*, hath,
“ not-
B

The Question.

Of a Guide in Matters of Faith.

“ notwithstanding that refusal, sufficient means still left
 “ him, whereby he may arrive at certainty in those
 “ Doctrines which are generally necessary to the Salvation of a Christian Man.

The moment of this Question.

Satisfaction in this Inquiry is of great moment ; for it relateth to our great end, and to the way which leads to it: And it nearly concerneth both the *Romanists* and the *Reformed*. If there be not such a *Guide*, the Estate of the *Romanists* is extremely dangerous ; for then the Blind take the Blind for their unerring Leaders ; and being once misled, they wander on without correcting their Error, having taken up this first as their fixed Principle , that their *Guide* cannot mistake the way. On the other hand, If God hath set up in his Church a Light so very clear and steady as is pretended ; the *Reformed* are guilty of great presumption, and expose themselves to great uncertainty, by shutting their Eyes against it.

The Temptations to believe the Negative part of this Question.

Now there lyes before men a double Temptation to a belief of the being of such a Guide in the Christian Church ; *Sloth* and Vicious *Humility* of Mind. *Sloth* inclineth Men rather to take up in an Implicit Faith, than to give themselves the trouble of a strict Examination of things. For there is less Pain in Credulity, than in bending of the Head by long and Strict Attention and severe Study.

Also there is a Shew of Humility in the deference which our understandings pay unto Authority ; especially to that which pretends to be, under Christ, Supreme on Earth. Although, in the paying of it without good reason first understood , Men are not *Humble* but *Slavish*.

The true Resolution of the Query.

But these Temptations prevail not upon honest and considerate Minds, which inquire, without prejudice, after Truth, and submit to the powerful Evidence

Of a Guide in Matters of Faith.

3

dence of it. Such will resolve the Question in the Affirmative ; and they may reasonably so do by considering these Propositions which I shall treat of in their order.

First, The Christian Church never yet wanted, nor shall it ever want, either the Doctrines of necessary Faith, or the Belief and Profession of them.

Secondly, Wheresoever God requireth the Belief of them, he giveth means sufficient for Information and unerring Assent.

Thirdly, Whatsoever those means are, every Man's personal reason giveth to the Mind that last Weight which turneth Deliberation into Faith.

Fourthly, The means which God hath given us towards necessary Faith and the certainty of it, is not the Authority of any Infallible Guide on Earth.

Yet, *Fifthly*, All Ecclesiastical Guidance is not to be rejected, in our pursuance of the Doctrines of Christian Faith, in the finding out or stating of which it is a very considerable help.

Sixthly, By the help of it, and Principally as it offers to us the Holy Scriptures in the Quality of the Rule of Faith, we have means sufficient to lead us to certainty in that Belief which is necessary to Life Eternal.

C H A P. II.

The Three First Propositions prov'd and illustrated.

Prop. I. **F**irst, *The Acknowledgment and Profession of the necessary Doctrines of the Christian Faith, are annexed inseparably to the Christian Church.*

There is but *one Faith*; and according to the saying of Leo the great *, *If it be not one, it is not at all*: For it cannot be contrary to it self. And though it be but *one*, yet Men of differing *Creeds* pretend to it, as there are some who will shew in several places, the *one seamless*

|| See Ferrand. *Coat of Christ* ||.

This one Faith never did, nor ever shall in all places fail.

The Apostles were themselves without error both in their own assent to the Fundamentals of the Christian Faith, and in the delivery of them.

They heard the Oracles of Christ from his own mouth, and they were Witnesses of his Resurrection; And they spake * what they *had seen and heard*. And they gave to the World Assurance of the Truth, by the miraculous signs of their Apostolical Office. And if they had not had such Assurance themselves, and could not have given proof to others of their mission, there would have been a defect in the first promulgation of the Gospel; and such as could not afterwards have been amended. That which, at first, had been delivered with uncertainty, would, with greater uncertainty, have been conveyed down to after Ages; and Men, who in process of time, graft error upon certain Truth,

Of a Guide in Matters of Faith.

5

Truth, would much more have grafted error upon uncertain Opinion.

Ever since the Apostles times there has been True Faith, and the Profession of it in the Catholick Church : And it will be so till Faith shall expire, and Men shall see him on whom they before believ'd. For a Church cannot subsist without the Fundamentals of Christianity. And Christ hath Sealed this Truth with his promise, that there shall be a Church as long as this World continues. * I mean by a Church a visible Society of Christians both Ministers and People ; for publick Worship on Earth cannot be invisible. * S. Mat. 28. 20.

But the True Faith and the Profession of it is not fixed to any place, or to any succession of Men in it. Gods Providence has written the contrary in the very *Afhes of the Seven Churches of the lesser Asia.*

Neither is any particular Church, though so far infallible in Fundamentals as to be preserved from actual error, an infallible Rule to all other Christians. If they follow the Doctrine of it, they err not, because it is true ; but if they follow that Church as an unerring Guide or Canon, they mistake in the Rule and Motive of their Faith. For that particular Church which Teacheth Truth, might possibly have err'd ; and the Church which errs, might have shined with the True Light. But the whole Church cannot so err in any Age ; for then the very being of a Church would cease.

Neither doth it hence follow, that the Faith of the *Roman* Church, when *Luther* arose, was the only true and certain Doctrine. For that Church was not then the only visible Church on Earth. There were visible Witnesses of Catholick Truth dispersed throughout the very Churches in Communion with the *Roman*, bearing their Testimony against her Corruptions. Some of
the

Of a Guide in Matters of Faith.

the *Greek Churches* also were then more visible than now they are, and more Orthodox : The Rich Papacy having much prevailed upon their necessities by Arguments gilded with Interest. Besides, if our Fore-Fathers under the Papacy embraced the True Faith, we have it still ; the *Faith* not being removed, but the *Corruption*. Their Question therefore [*Where was your Religion before Luther ?*] is not more pertinent amongst Disputers, than this is amongst Husbandmen, [*Where was the Corn before it was weeded ?*] tho the Tares were more than the Wheat.

Prop. II.

We have seen that necessary Faith is perpetual, and it is as manifest that *wheresoever God requireth the belief of it, he vouchsafeth sufficient means for information, and unerring Assent.*

Of all he does not require this belief, for to all the Gospel is not preached, and where it is preached there are Infants, and Persons of Age so distempered in Mind, as to remain unavoidably Children in understanding.

And though the same Sum of Doctrines is generally necessary to Salvation, yet the Creed of all Men is not of equal length, seeing they have unequal capacities.

But wheresoever there is a particular Society of Men, who call themselves a Church, yet err actually in the necessary Articles of the Faith, it is certain they were not forced into that error for want of external means. For the Just Judg of the World would never have required Unity in the Faith upon pain of his Eternal displeasure, if he had not given to Men Power sufficient for such Unity. No Tyrant on Earth has been guilty of such undisguised Injustice as that is, which maketh a Law for the punishment of the Blind because they miss their way. The Articles of Christian Religion come not to the mind by natural reason, but by Faith; and

and Faith comes by hearing or reading ; and where these means are not offered , a man is rather an Ignorant Person than an Unbeliever. Wherefore our Saviour told the perverse *Jews*, * that if the *Messiah* had never been reveal'd to them, they had not been answerable for the Sin of Infidelity : But that, since he was come to them, and by them despised, their Infidelity was blackned with great aggravation.

* *Joh. 15. 22.*
24.

The means, then, are sufficient wheresoever the end is absolutely required; but whatsoever those means are, *the Act of assent is to be ultimately resolved into each Mans Personal reason.* For no man can believe or assent but upon some ground or motive which appears credible to him. He could not believe unless he had some reason or other why he believed. *When all is done* (said Mr. *Thorndike* *) *Men must and will be Judges for themselves.* I do not quote the saying because it is extraordinary, but because that Learned Man said it who was careful to pay to Authority its minutest dues. If a Man believes upon Authority, he hath a further reason for the believing of it. He is not willing to take Pains in examining that which is proposed to him ; or he thinks himself of less Ability in understanding than those from whom he borrows his Light. If he desireth another to judge for him, his choice is determined by the Opinion he hath conceived of him. Every Man has his reason, though it be a weak one, and such as cannot justify it self or him. Something at last turns the Ballance, though it be but a Feather.

* *To the Reader of the Disc. of Govern. of Churches.*

This the *Romanists* own as well as the Reformed, And one * of the more judicious of them submits his many Quotations, and his Reasonings and Refinings upon them, to the discretion of every private Peruser, saying, ' I desire the Readers Faith to my Words no further than the following Testimonies make it appear. But

* *R. H. Rom. doct. of Repen. vind. p. 2.*

But such Appeals touch them very inwardly in the case of a new Convert. To induce a Man of another particular Church to embrace their Communion, they submit these weighty points to his private Judgement: What is a True Church, and which are the marks of it? What is the *Roman* Church? And whether the marks of the True Church do only belong unto the *Roman*? What Men or what Books speak the sense of that Church? They tell us **“That the Light of a Mans own reason first serves him so far as to the discovery of a Guide; Also that, in this discovery, the Divine Providence hath left it so clear and evident, that a sincere and unbyassed quest cannot miscarry. But when once this Guide is found out, the man is afterwards, for all other things that are prescribed by this Guide, to subject and resign his reason. As if it were not as difficult to judge of such a Guide, as of his direction. It is so, but it is not own’d. Wherefore tho at the Conference betwixt the Bishop of Meaux, and Monsieur Claude before Mademoiselle de Duras, the Argument of the Debate, (sufficiently obscure as it was manag’d) was submitted to that Lady; yet in the Close *upon her Conversion, the Bishop exhorted her to receive the true sense of the Scripture from the Church without Examination.*

* R. H. Guide
in Controv. in
Pref. p. 3.

* Conf. Avec.
M. Cl. 1678.
p. 113, 114.
— Qu’elle
recevoit de
l’Eglise, SANS
EXAMINER,
le vray sens de
l’Ecriture.

It seems the *Roman* Church is like a Cave, into which a man has Light enough to enter; but when once he is entred, he is in thick Darknes.

C H A P. III.

*The Fourth Proposition prov'd by several Considerations. Here of the Three First. No Infal-
lible living Guide given to the Jewish
Church, or promised to the Christian. No
direction any where given for the finding
of him.*

BUT, how subservient soever our reason may be to our Faith; *The means which God hath given us towards the certain attaining of it, is not the Authority of any infallible Guide on Earth.* Prop. IV.

This will not be disbelieved by those who weigh well the following Considerations.

First, *God did not set up such a constant, infallible Guide among the Jews; though at first, he gave Assurance to them by Miracle, that Moses had received his Commission from him, and had brought to them the Tables which he had Written, for their direction, with his own finger.* Confid. I.

Some of the *Sanhedrim* were of the Sect of the *Sad-
duces*, who erred in the Fundamental Point of a future
State. Most of them erred in the Quality of the
Messiah, not considering their Scriptures so much as
their Traditions. And of the errors of the *Levitical*
Priesthood there is, in the Old Testament, * frequent
mention, and great complaint. And the Prophet *Mal-*
chy †, as soon as he had said, *The Priests lips shall pre-*

* *Isai.* 36. 10.
* *Jer.* 2. 8.
* *Ex.* 7. 26.
* *C.* 22. 26.
† *Mal.* 2. 7, 8.

C

should keep

Of a Guide in matters of Faith.

~~serve~~ knowledg, he adds this reproof, *but ye are departed out of the way.*

It is true, the *Israelites* were, by God, directed in difficult cases to an Assembly of Judges ¶ But they were not Judges of Controversies in *Doctrine*, but in *Property*. To their sentence the People were to submit, as to an expedient for Peace; though Judgment might be perverted or mistaken.

¶ *Deut.* 17. 8,
to 12.

See *Lev.* 4. 13.

It must be, also, confessed, that God spake to them by the *Oracle of Urim*, and that the voice of it was infallible. But its answers concerned not the necessary Rudiments of the *Mosaick Law*, but emergencies in their Civil affairs; those especially of Peace and War.

But if we admit that there was under *Judaism* a living infallible Guide; it does not, thence, follow, that it must be so under Christianity. For their small precinct (the People of which were thrice in a year to come up to the Temple) was much more capable of such a Judge than the Christian Church, which is as wide as the World. Also the new Revelation is more clear and distinct than the old one was, and stands not in such need of an Interpreter.

Confid. II. Secondly, *God hath, no where, promised Christians such a Judge:* He hath no where said that he hath given such a one to the Christian Church. And seeing such a one cannot be had without Gods supernatural assistance, the most knowing amongst Men being subject both to Error and Falshood; it is great arrogance, whilst the Scripture is silent, to say he is in being. And to Affirm that if there were not such a Guide, God would be wanting in means sufficient for the maintenance of Peace and Truth, is presumptuously to obtrude the schemes of Mans fancy upon Gods Wisdom. He can Govern his Church without our methods.

Now

Of a Guide in matters of Faith.

11

Now God hath no where promised such a Judge to Christian Men; though he hath promised help on Earth, and assistance from Heaven to Men diligent and sincere in their inquiries after Truths which are necessary for them.

There are two places of Scripture, which are by some taken for Promises of such a nature, though they were not, by the Divine Wisdom, so intended.

Of these, the First is that which was spoken by Christ unto St. Peter *, *The Gates of Hell shall not prevail against (the Church).* Which Promise concerneth the Church in general, and the necessary Faith of it, and not any particular persons, or places, or successions of persons in them. * S. Mat. 16. 18.

And Christ doth here assure us, that *the Gates of the Grave* shall not swallow up the Church; that it shall not enter in at them; *that it shall not die or perish.* But he doth not say he will preserve it by the means of any Earthly Infallible Guide. He can by other ways continue it till time it self shall fail.

The other place of Scripture is the promise of Christ a little while before his Ascension into the Heavens. † *Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the World:* As long as this Age of the Messiah shall last, and that is the last Time or Age. This promise is indeed made to the Apostles, and to their successors also. But it is a promise of general assistance; and it is made upon condition that they go forth and make Disciples of all Men of all Nations, and Baptize them, and give them further instruction in the things which Christ gave in charge to them. And some of the successors of the Apostles have not performed these conditions; and the Governour of the Church of Sardis had not held fast what he had received and heard. † S. Mat. 28. 20. Rev. 3. 1, 2, 3.

Of a Guide in matters of Faith.

As God hath not *promised* an unerring Guide, so neither hath he *said* he hath set up such an one in any Church on Earth.

He hath not said it either *directly*, or by *consequence*.

The *places* which are supposed *directly* to affirm this, are two, and both mistaken.

One of them is that of Christ to his Disciples, after he had given Commission to them to preach the Gospel, * *He that heareth you, heareth me*; Me the infallible Way and the Truth.

* S. Luke 10.
16.

This Speech, if it be extended to all Ministers, it makes them all infallible Guides. And it is certain they are so, as long as they deliver to the People what they received from Christ. But the words are especially directed to the seventy Disciples who were taught to preach a plain Fundamental Truth, that the *Kingdom of God was come nigh to the Jews* †. And these Disciples were able to give to the Jews a demonstration of the Truth of that Doctrine which they taught, by miraculous signs: *By healing the Sick* *, and *doing among them mighty works*.

† S. Luke 10.
1, 9.

* Ver. 13.

1 Tim. 3. 15. Another place used as an express Testimony, is that in the first to Timothy, to whom St. Paul saith, that the Church is the *Pillar and Ground of Truth*. But this place also is misapplied. It seemeth to be spoken of that Church of Ephesus in which St. Paul advised Timothy to behave himself with singular care; Which place hath so far failed, that the lofty Building called St. John's Church †, is now become a *Turkish Mosch*. But if it were spoken in a general sense, it would amount only to this meaning: A Christian Church is like a Pillar sustained by a *Pedestal* on which a writing is so fixed, that all who pass by may see it. It is (as Jerusalem once was to the Heathen-World) a *City on a Hill*: It is a visible Society which giveth notice to Jews and Gentiles of Chri-

† Rec. of the
Greek Church
p. 44.

Of a Guide in matters of Faith.

I 6

Christianity, and is instrumental to awaken their observation, and by their sense to prepare the way to their belief. For this advertisement being so publickly given to them, they have fair occasion of examining the grounds of Christian Truth, which when they find, they will be induced to build upon them. In this sense likewise, though not in this alone, Apostolical Men were called *Lights* and *Pillars*. In the Book of the *Revelation* * this promise is made to him who persevereth in his Christianity, notwithstanding the cross which it brings upon him. *Him will I make a Pillar in the Temple of my God, and I will write my name upon him, and the name of his God, and the name of the City of his God, which is new Jerusalem* [or the Christian Church.]

* Rev. 3. 12.

And S. Chrysostom || gives St. Paul the Titles of the *Light of the Churches*, the *Foundation of the Faith*, the *Pillar and Ground of Truth*. The Governours of the Church do ministerially exhibit Christian Truth ; they do not by mere Authority impose it.

|| In 1 Cor. 2
— τὸ φῶς τῆς
ἐκκλησίας, ὁ
δομικὸς ὁ
πύλος, ὁ
ἀστυν.

Among the *Places* which are said to prove, by good consequence, that there is a Living Guide of Faith, that in the Eighteenth of St. *Matthews* Gospel * is the Principal.

* S. Mat. 18,
15, 16, 17.

There our Saviour requireth his Followers, if their Brethren persisted in their offences, to tell it to the Church, and to esteem them no longer Members of their Society, if they despised the Sentence of it. From whence they conclude with strange Inadvertence, that such a Decree is therefore infallible.

But our Lord speaks of their Brothers *Trespases* against them, and not of his *Hereſie*: And of the Discipline, and not of the Doctrine, either of the Synagogue or the Church. In which case if we submit, even where there is error in the Sentence, for Peace sake, and

See Deut. 27. 6.

Of a Guide in matters of Faith.

and because we are come to the last Appeal ; we worthily sacrifice private Good to publick Order. And such Submission is safe in point of property, though not in point of Doctrine ; for we may, without Sin, depart from our property, but not from our Faith.

Now much of this that has been said in order to the explication of the foregoing places, might have been well omitted, if I had designed this little Discourse for the use only of such *Romanists* as had been conversant with the Writings of the Fathers. For then I should have needed only to have cited those Ancients, and shewed that their sense of these several places was plainly different from the modern interpretations of the Church-Men of *Rome*. And, by this way of arguing, they are self-condemned. For they fall according to their own Rule of expounding Scripture by the unanimous consent of the Primitive Fathers, who with one voice, speak another sense. Those who doubt of this, may receive satisfaction from the Learned Letters of *Monsieur Launoy* *.

* *Launoy in Epist. ad Carol. magistrum ad Jacob. Bevil. ad Guil. Voell. ad Raim. Formentinum in 3 par. Epist. Confid. III.*

If God had promised an infallible Guide, or told us he had given one to his Church, he would, doubtless, have added some directions for the finding of him. For, to say in general, you shall have a Star which will always Guide you without all dangerous error; and not to inform us in what part of the Firmament it is to be seen, is to amuse rather than to promise.

Now, God hath no where given us such direction. He hath no where pointed us to this *Church*, or that *Council* ; to this *Person*, or that *Local* succession of Men. He hath not said the Guide is at *Antioch*, or *Hierusalem* ; at *Nice*, or *Constantinople* ; at *Rome*, or *Avignon*.

You will say, he hath directed us to *St. Peter*. I answer, no more than to the rest of the Apostles, to whom

whom he gave equal power in their Ordination*; * *Joh. 20. 21.*
 All of whom he made equally Shepherds of the Flock; † *S. Mar. 9. 36.*
 † to all of whom he gave equal Commission to make *C. 10. 6.*
 Profelytes of all Nations*. And in this sense St. Chry- *2 Pet. 5. 2.*
 sostom † affirmed concerning St. Paul, that the whole * *S. Mar. 28.*
 world [or the World of the Roman Empire] was his † *6, 17, 18, 19.*
Diocefs. You will reply, that he promised, on him par- † *S. Chryf. in*
 ticularly, upon this Rock or Stone, this Kypha (a Syriac *1 Cor. 9. 2.*
 Word of the Masculine Gender*) this Peter; to build *ἡ δὲ διὰ τὴν*
 his Church. I answer, the Ancients took the Word *ἡν ἀναγὰρ*
 as Feminine †, and understood it rather of his Confession *ἰσχυρὰ ἡμεῖς*
 than of his Person. If it was spoken of his Person, *μαίρε, &c.*
 it was spoken by way of Emphasis, not Exclusion; † See R. H.
 for there were twelve Foundations*. Of these he might *Guide in Con-*
 be called the first, having first preached the Gospel to *trov. Dif. 1. p.*
 Jews and Gentiles †, the Eleven standing up with him, *5. and Socin in*
 and he speaking as the Mouth of the Apostolical Col- *Loc.*
 ledg. † *S. Hil. de Trin*
l. 6. dixit Pe-
trus, Tu es fili-
us Dei, &c. su-
per hanc igitur
Confession.
Petram Eccle-
sia edificatio.
est v. Launoy

in *Epist. ad Voellum.* * *Rev. 21. 14. Ephes. 2. 20.* † *Acts 2. 14, 41, 47*

CHAP. IV.

*The Fourth Consideration. Five pretended
 Guides enumerated, and found insufficient.*

WE cannot by the strictest enumeration, find out
 any living infallible Guide existing in any Age
 after St. Peter and the other Apostles in the Christian
 Church.

I. *This Guide could not be the Church diffusive of the* *Consid. IV.*
first Ages. For the suffrages of every Christian were
 never gathered. And if we will have their sense, they
 must rise from the dead and give it us.

2. *This*

Of a Guide in matters of Faith.

2. *This Guide cannot be the Faith (as such) of all the Governours of all the Primitive Churches.* The sum of it was never collected. There were anciently general *Creeds*, but such as especially related to the *Heresies* then on foot; and who can affirm upon grounds of certainty, that each Bishop in the World consented to each Article, or to each so expressed?

3. *This Guide is not a Council perfectly free and universal.* For a Guide which cannot be had, is none. If such a *Council* could assemble, it would not err in the necessities of Faith. For there cannot be a regular Flock without a Shepherd; and if all the Spiritual Shepherds in the World should at once, and by consent, go so much astray; the whole Flock of the Church Catholick would be scattered. And that would contradict the promise of Christ the Supreme, Faithful, Infallible Pastor. But there never was yet an Universal Council properly so called; Neither can we suppose the probability of it but by supposing the being of one Temporal Christian Monarch of the World who might call, or suffer it. In the *Councils* called *General*, if we speak comparatively, there were not many *Southern* or *Western Bishops* present at them. It was thus, at that first Oecumenical Council, the Council of *Nice*; though, in one sacred place (as *Eusebius* † hath noted) there were assembled, *Syrians* and *Cilicians*, *Phœnicians*, and *Arabians*; *Palæstinians*, *Egyptians*, *Thebæans*, *Libyans*, *Mesopotamians*; a *Persian*, a *Scythian* Bishop; and many others from other Countreys. But there was but one Bishop for *Africa*, one for *Spain*, one for *Gaul*; two Priests as Deputies of the infirm and Aged Bishop of *Rome*. Whilst (for Instance sake) there were seventeen Bishops for the small Province of *Isauria*. Yet such Councils are very useful; such we reverence; but God did not set them up as the only and

† *Euseb. l. 3. vit. Const. c. 7. 8. p. 487. Socrat. E.H. l. c. 8. p. 19.*

* *V. Concil. Labb. Tom. 2. p. 50 &c.*

and the infallible Guides of Faith. If these were such Guides, what Guided the Church which was before them? By what rule was *Ebion* judged before the Council of *Nice*? How can we be infallibly Guided by them in Controversies of Faith not determined by them; nay not brought before them; nay scarce moved till these latter days? Such (for the purpose) are the Controversies about the virtue of the *Sacrifice* of Christ, and of *Justification* by the Faith of mere *recumbence* upon his Merits. Or how shall a private Man who errs in the Faith, be deliver'd from his Heresie, seeing he may die some years ere a Council can assemble, or being assembled, can form its decrees? *Arius* vented his Heresie about ten years before the Council of *Nice* was called for the suppressing of it. And soon after he had given vent to it, it spread throughout *Egypt* and *Lybia* and the upper *Thebes*, as *Socrates* * has reported: And in a short time many other Provinces and Cities were infected with the contagion of it. And in the pretended Council of *Trent*, no less than five *Popes* were successively concerned; and it lasted in several places longer than two legal lives of a Man. † There was indeed a Canon in the *Western Church* * for the holding of a Council once in the space of each ten years: But that Canon has not been hitherto obeyed; and as affairs stand in the Church, it is impracticable. For the *Pope* will exclude all the *Greek* and *Reformed* Bishops: he will crowd the Assembly with Bishops of his own Creation; and with Abbots also; he will not admit of former Councils unless they serve his purpose; not so much as that of *Nice* it self. ‡ He will be the *Judge*, though about his own *Supremacy*. He will multiply *Italians* and others who upon Oath * owe their votes to him. He will not hold a Council upon the terms approved by all *Romish* Princes. Nor did they agree at their last Council; the

* *Socr. Eccl. Hist. l. i. c. 6. p. 9.*

† *From A. 1545. to A. 1563.*

* *V. Concil. Const. sess. 39.*

‡ *V. Greg. Mag. Ep. 6 31. Leo 1. Ep. 53. Gelaf. 1. Ep. 13. Concil. Labb. Tom. 10. p. 23. 379. & Pontific. Roman.*

Of a Guide in Matters of Faith.

Emperour would not send his Bishops to *Bologna*, nor the *French* King his to *Trent*. And though the *French* Church believed the Doctrines of that Synod, yet they did not receive them from the Authority of it, but they embraced them as the former Doctrines of the *Roman* Church. And the *Parisian* Faculty (a) prepared the way to the Articles of *Trent*.

(a) A.D. 1542.
in Coll. Sorb.

See Richer. H.
Conc. general.
vol. 4. p. 162,
163, &c.

Notwithstanding all this, we firmly believe that at least the first four general Councils did not err in Faith; and it is pious to think that God would not suffer so great a temptation in the Church on Earth. Yet still we believe those Councils not to be infallible in their constitution, but so far as they followed an infallible rule. For the greatest Truth is not always with the greatest number: And great numbers may appear on contrary sides. The Council of *Constantinople* under *Constantine Copronymus* deserved that name which was of old given to it of *The Holy, Great, Oecumenical Seventh Synod*. It consisted of 338 Bishops lawfully assembled: and whereas it is said, *That none of the Patriarchs joined with them* (a), it is very fallaciously spoken; for *Anastatius* Patriarch of *Constantinople* was lately dead; the three others of *Alexandria*, *Antioch*, and *Hierusalem*, were prevented by the *Saracens*. The Pope was desir'd to be present, but refused. He was then forming a League with *Pipin* against *Constantine*, and greedy of the spoil of the *Exarchate* of *Ravenna*. This Great Council unanimously decreed against the *Use of Images in Churches*. Yet the second Synod of *Nice* consisting of about three hundred and fifty Bishops determin'd for it. And a while after, in the *West*, the Council of *Franckford* consisting of about three hundred Bishops, reversed that decree. And, after that, the Council of *Trent* did re-establish it; though there the voting Persons were not fifty. With such uncertain doubles of belief must

(a) R. H. Guide.
disc. 2. p. 109.

must they move who follow a Guide in Religion without reference to a further rule.

But, here, there is offered to us, by the Guide in *Object*. Controversies, * "an Objection, of which this is the ** R. H. Annot. on D Still. Answer. p. 82, 83.* sum. The fifth Canon of the Church of England does declare that the thirty nine Articles were agreed upon for the avoidance of the diversities of opinions, and the establishing of consent touching true Religion. Consent touching true Religion is consent in Matters of Faith. Establishing of consent relateth both to Layety and Clergy. The third and fourth Canons of 1640. decree the Excommunication of those who will not abjure their holding *Popery* and *Socinianism*. The Reformed Churches in France teach the like Doctrine, threatening to cut them off from the Church who acquiesce not in the resolution of a National Synod. † The same course was taken with the *Remonstrants* in the Synod of Dort. * Where- *† Art. 31. Ch. 3. du consistoire si un ou plusieurs, &c. * Syn. Dort. sess. 138.* fore Protestants ought not to detract from the Authority of General Councils, whilst they assume to themselves so great a Power in their particular Synods.

The force of this Objection is thus removed. Every Church hath Power of admitting or excluding Members, else it hath not means sufficient to its end, the order and concord of its Body. Every particular Church ought to believe that it does not err in its definitions; for it ought not to impose any known error upon its Members. But though it believes it does not err, it does not believe it upon this reason, because God hath made it an infallible Guide; but rather for this, because it hath sincerely and with Gods assistance followed a rule which is infallible. And, upon this supposition, it imposeth Doctrines, and excludeth such as with contumacy dissent from them (a).

Answer.

(a) See Article 20. 21. 12.

Of a Guide in Matters of Faith.

4. *This Guide is not the Present Church declaring to particular Christians the sense of the Church of former Ages.* How can this declaration be made, seen in Churches differ, and each Church calls it self the true one, and pretendeth to the Primitive pattern? The Church of *Rome* hath, on her side, the suffrages of all the Councils and Fathers; the first, the middle, the last, if *Campian* the Jesuit may be believed (*b*). On the other hand *Monsieur Larroque* hath Written a Book of the Conformity of the Protestant Churches in *France* with the Discipline of the Ancient Christian Church, taking it for granted that their Doctrine was Catholick. And we likewise pretend both to the Doctrine and Discipline of it. All of us cannot be in the right. The *Roman* Church, without any proof, calleth her self the Church Catholick; and she pretendeth to convey to us the sense of the Ancient Fathers and Councils; which sense was that they understood formerly by the word *Tradition*. * And in this sense a *Romanist* said of Pope *Honorius* †, that he had broken the rule of *Tradition*. But how can we esteem that Church a faithful representer of the sense of the Ancients whilst the Reformed consult the Ancients with equal ability, and find a contrary sense in them? Whilst the Church of *Rome* *, by a kind of Ecclesiastical Coinage, stampeth Divine Authority upon Books esteemed by the Councils and Fathers to be *Apo-chryphal*? † Whilst it hath forged decrees of Popes, * and (like a deceitful *Gibeonite*) rendred that which was really new, in appearance old and mouldy, on purpose to promote the imposture? How doth it give us the sense of the Ancients, when it owneth what it formerly disowned as Canonical, the Epistle to the *Hebrews* †? When it taketh away the Cup which Pope *Gelasius* called a grand Sacriledg *? When it now rejecteth the Communicating of Infants which in former times was esteem-

(*b*) *Camp. Rat.*
3. p. 180. *Rat.*
5. p. 185:

* *Lib. diurn.*
Pontif. p. 35.
etenim hujus
Apostolic. Tra-
ditionis nor-
nam quam
venerandam
Sanctor. 318.
Patrum Con-
cilium quod
in Nicea, &c.
& p. 43. hujus-
modi Evangeli-
cam Traditio-
nem.

† *Histor. Mo-*
not. b. p. 123.

* *Conc. Trid.*
Sess. 4. decr. 1.
† *V. constit. A-*
post. can. Apost.
conc. Laod. conc.
Nic. 1. S. Hieron.
Proleg. &c. Eu-
seb. E. H. l. 4.
c. 26. p. 149.
Cron. l. 2. &c.
* *V. Blondelli*
Pseudo-Isodo-
rum.

† *V. S. Hieron.*
in Isai. c. 6. 8.

* *Gratian in de*
Consecr. dist. 2.
cap. 2.

steemed by many a very necessary point? When a former Pope *Gregory* condemns the Title of Universal Pastor as Anti-Christian, and a latter insists upon it as the choicest Flower in the Papal Prerogative? When *St. Austin* (a) and from him the very Breviary (b) shall expound Christs promise, of being always with his Church, of the Presence of his Divinity, and of his Spirit, and not of his Body: And Pope *Innocent* the third shall interpret it as meant also of his corporal presence (c)?

(a) *S. Aug. tract.*
30. in *Job.* 3
tract. 50.
(b) *Brev. Rom.*
Domin. infra oct.
Asc. 3. noct. lect.
7. p. 440.
(c) *Innoc. 3.*
Myst. miss. l. 4.
p. 196.

And if the *Roman Church* falsifyeth written Tradition, how shall we trust her for Oral? And how and at what time did that Oral Tradition remove from *Greece* to *Rome* where the *Greek Church*, which it alloweth to have been once possessed of the true Tradition, is accused of Heresie? This principle of Oral Tradition is most uncertain to their Judges; and to those to whom they offer it, it is most obscure. It is a principle on which they can serve a purpose, in justifying novel Doctrines as Oral Traditions not known to any but the *Roman Church*, which pretendeth to the custody of them.

5. *This Guide is not what they call the Roman Catholick Church, or the Roman with the Collection of particular Churches in Communion with her, declaring her present Doctrine by the uniform voice of her Pastors and People* || For in some Ages there is no such uniform Declaration. In our Age one part of that Church contradicts what another declares in a very material point, and the Pope forbears a formal decision. For Example sake, The Body of the *French Clergy* sets forth four Propositions which detract from the Infallibility of the Pope. Soon after this is done, *Georgius Szelepechemy Arch-bishop of Gran*, and *Primate of Hungary*, do's publickly condemn them as destructive to the souls of Christian Men *

|| See *Vind. of*
B. of Meaux,
p. 100.

* *V. Censur.* Men *. Here the Laity tho in the same Roman Church, Hungar. p. 6, have in divers Countries, contrary Guides.

7, 8. *Inter cætera autem quæ se nobis corrigenda & eliminanda obtulerunt & moram pati non possunt sine evidenti periculo Animarum, non ultimum locum tenent quatuor illæ Propositiones quæ Cleri Gall. &c.*

CHAP. V.

The Remainder of the Fourth Consideration concerning a sixth pretended Guide, the Bishop of Rome. Also the fifth Consideration concerning the little necessity there is for such Guidance.

6. **G**od hath not set up any one Person in the Catholick Church in the quality of an unerring Guide in the Christian Faith. The Bishops of Rome who pretend to this Prerogative, do but pretend: It is a tender point; and the Pope's Legates, in the Council of Trent ||, were enjoined to give forth this Advertisement, that the Fathers, upon no account whatsoever, should touch it, or dispute about it. They who examine it, will soon reject it as false and useless.

|| *H. Conc. Trid.*
l. 2.

Arg. I. And, 1. *Whether the Pope be or be not the Guide, the Men of the Roman Communion are exposed to dangerous uncertainty. For, it is not yet determined amongst them, whether they are to follow the Pope, with, or without, or against a Council. Yet a Pope hath owned a Council which deposed other Popes, and by decree, set it self above them, or rather vindicated the superiority due to it. Thus Martin the fifth received the Papal Mitre from the Council of Constance, after it had deposed Gregory the twelfth, Benedict the thirteenth,*
and

and John the twenty third. Again, there have been, by the account given us in their own Historians †, more than twenty formed Schisms in that Church, two or more Popes pretending at the same time to the infallible Chair, and each of them not being without their followers, and giving Holy Orders. And at this time there is risen an Apologist* for *Mauritius Burdin* or *Gregory* the eighth, though he was ejected by the Roman Church, which received *Gelasius* into his place; *Burdin* being disliked by them as a Creature of *Henry* the Emperour. This Schism (saith *St. Bernard* †) distracted that Church, and gave it a wound only not incurable. And *Baluzius** professeth that it was then difficult to understand which of the two, *Gregory* or *Gelasius* was the Legitimate successor. of Pope *Paschal*. Now, how useles to them is the pretence of a Guide, when they want some other Guide who should tell them which of the pretenders they may securely follow?

† See the Index of Onuphrii, Hist. Pontif. ed. colon. 1610.

* Steph. Baluz. in miscellan. l. 3. p. 471. 10 514.

† S. Bern. Ep. 219.

* Baluz. ibid. p. 514. difficile sum erat, &c.

Secondly, *The Popes themselves in their Solemn Profession, suppose themselves liable to the misleading of the People even in Matters of Faith.* For having owned the Faith of the Six General Councils, “* They further profess themselves and others to be subject to an *Anathema*, if they advance novelty contrary to the afore said Evangelical Tradition, and the integrity of the Orthodox and Christian Faith.

* Lib. diurn. Pontif. 2 professio fidei. p. 43.—Unde & districti Anathematis interdictioni subicimus, si quis unquam, seu nos, sive est Alius, qui novum aliquid presumat contra hujusmodi Evangelicam Traditionem, & Orthodoxa fidei, Christianaq; Religionis integritatem, &c.

Thirdly, *If the Pope challengeth this Power of Infallible Guidance, he must lay claim to it by his succeeding of St. Peter in that Chair Apostolical.* But by equal reason, the successors of each Apostle may challenge the office of an infallible Guide. For the Power which Christ

Arg. III.

(†) S. Mat.
18. 1. ch. 20.
24, 26. S. Luk.
22. 24, 25.

Christ gave to St. Peter, he gave to the rest: It was not special. They did not understand that Christ intended by his Promise (†) to give greater Power to St. Peter, than to the rest; for there arose a controversy among them after this, who should be chief, and Christ declared against such Supremacy. When they were together as in an *Apostolical Colledg*, before or on the day of Pentecost, there was need of a *Præsident* for Order sake; and St. Peter might then be the *First* of them. He was not so after they were dispersed in order to the propagation of the Christian Faith, and the planting of Churches; he was not so at *Jerusalem*, where St. James being the Bishop, had the Precedence; and in *Rome* it self St. Pauls Province at the beginning seems to have been greater than St. Peters; it being the Province of the *Gentiles*, whilst St. Peters was that of the *Jews*. Accordingly St. Pauls Church was more in the City, St. Peters in the Suburbs, the *Vaticane* being then (as Mr. Thorndike calls it †) the *Jewry of Rome*. And for the Bishops of *Antioch* who first succeeded St. Peter, they have a much fairer pretence than those of *Rome*. The truth is, *Hierusalem* was properly the Mother-Church: Though *Rome* was the Imperial City; and if by this means the Popes had not fate higher, they would not have pretended to see further than others.

† Thornd. Epil.
3 part p. 164,
165.

Arg. IV. Fourthly, Those who have considered the writings of many Popes, and the decrees made by them, have found no reason to lay their Faith at their Golden Sandal. It is manifest to every Learned man, that the eyes of the Pope are not (metaphorically) like those of *Augustus*, in which (it is said) there appeared a brightness like that of the Sun. If we had more of their History, and more of their Writings, we should find more of their errors. They have shewed both ignorance and extravagance in opinion, and error in the Faith it self.

There

There are not, perhaps, weaker or more absurd passages in any Ecclesiastical Writer, than we may find in the works of Pope *Innocent the third*, who was called the *Wonder of the World* *. He saith of *Subdeacons* that they represented the *Nethinims* † (or *Nathinnims* as he calls them;) and that *Nathaniel* was one of that Order. * That the *Pope* does not use a *Pastoral rod*, because *St. Peter* sent his *Staff* to *Eucharius* the first *Bishop* of *Treves*, to whom *Maternus* succeeded, who, by the same *Staff*, was raised from the dead. † That the People have seven *Salutations* in the *Mass*, in order to the expelling the seven deadly *Sins*, and receiving the sevenfold *Grace of God*. * That an *Epistle*, signifying in *Greek* an *Over-sending* or *supererogation*, the word agrees very well to the *Apostolical Epistles*, which are superadded to the *Gospel* (a). He allots to each *Article* of the *Apostolical* and *Constantinopolitan Creeds*, a particular *Apostle*, and finds the *mystery* in all things that are twelve in number. For example sake, in the twelve loaves of *Shew-Bread*; in the twelve *Tribes*; twelve hours, twelve *Months*.

He gives this reason why *Water* is by the *Bishop* mixed with *Wine* in the *Holy Chalice*; because it is said in the *Revelation*, that many *Waters* signify many *People*, and that *Christ* shed his *Blood* for the *People* (b). He saith that *Judas* was not at the *Sacrament* (c) because he was not to drink it new with *Christ* in his *Kingdom*, which priviledg he had promised to all the *partakers*. He teacheth that *Mice* eat only the *Shews of Consecrated Bread* (d). He professeth rather to venerate *Sacraments* than to prie into them (e), because it is written in *Exodus* the twelfth, concerning the *Paschal Lamb*, *Eat not of it raw, nor sodden at all with Water, but rost with Fire*. I have not narrowly ransacked the *plaits* of the *Popes Vestments* for this refuse-

E

matter;

* *Mat. Par. A*

1217. *stupor mundi.*

† *Ezra. 8. 20.*

* *Innoc. 3. Myst. missæ l. 1. c. 2. fol. 158.*

† *Innoc. 3. ibid. c. 62. fol. 165.*

* *Ibid l. 2. c. 24. fol. 170.*

(a) *Ibid c. 29. fol. 171.*

(b) *Ibid c. 38.*

fol. 177.

(c) *Ibid l. 4. c. 13. fol. 189.*

(d) *Ibid c. 16. fol. 190.*

(e) *Ibid c. 19.*

matter ; It is obvious enough ; and so were a great many other sayings of equal weakness ; but I am weary of them. There have been other Popes also extremely Credulous and Injudicious. *Eugenius the third* approved of the Prophecies or Enthusiastick Dreams of *Hildegardis*, in the Synod of *Triers*, as Inspirations. Pope *Zachary* judged the true Doctrine of *Antipodes*, to be heretical in the case of the more Learned and Knowing *Virgilius* (a.) Herein the Pope committed a greater error than the poor Priest who Baptized in *nomine Patriæ & filia & Spiritus Sancta* (b.) and whose lack of Latin *Boniface* the German Apostle would have punished by the Rebaptization of his Profelytes, if the said *Virgilius* had not, by application to that Pope, prevented it. It is true, *Virgilius* was accused as an Heretick who had set up another Sun and another Moon, as well as another World of Men whose feet were opposite to ours. But *Velferus* himself (c) hath the ingenuity to confess that this was meant only of the Sun and Moon as shining to our *Antipodes*, as well as to us. And that the accusation was framed by ignorant Men who had not the acuteness to understand the Globular form of the Earth, and the scheme of the proposer. Neither had Pope *Zachary* himself sagacity enough to discern the nature of this ridiculous charge. He who can mistake Truth for Heresie, may mistake Heresie for Truth.

Now that Popes have erred not only in lesser things, but even in matters of Faith, is plain from History. I will instance only in *Vigilius* and *Honorius*, forbearing to speak of *Libertus* and divers others who swerved from the truly Ancient Catholick Faith.

Pope *Vigilius* framed a *Constitution* in favour of the three Chapters or Nestorian-Writings of *Ibas* Bishop of *Edessa*, *Theodorus* of *Mopsuestia*, and *Theodoret* Bishop of *Cyrus*. This *Constitution* was published by Cardinal

Baro-

(a) *Epist. Zach p. ad Bonifac. inter op. M. Velferi. in l. 5. Rev. Boic. p. 148. de perverfa autem [Virgilius] Doctrina, quam contra dominum & animam suam locutus est, quod scil. alius mundus & alii homines sub terra sint alijsq; Sol & Luna, si convictus fuerit ita confiteri, hunc accito Concilio ab Ecclesia pello Sacerdotii honore privatum.*
 (b) *Velfer. op. Ibid p. 147.*
 (c) *Velf. Ibid. p. 149.*

Baronius † out of an Ancient Manuscript in the Vatican Library : And he calls it a Decree * in defence of these Chapters. In this decree the Pope doth not only justify these Heretical Writings, but, with the Followers of Theodorus, he falsly chargeth upon the Council of Chalcedon the Epistle of Ibas †, and calls it Orthodox. This charge the Fathers of the fifth general Council (a) shew to be unjust and false. That Council condemneth those three Chapters as Heretical. And, together with them, it condemneth (b) Pope Vigilius and others under the name of Sequaces or Followers of Nestorius and Theodorus. Baronius himself acknowledgeth that the decree of that Council was set up against the decree of that Pope (c .) These Chapters had not been condemned if they had not contained in them the Nestorian-Heresie. The Epistle of Ibas does, in particular manner, extol Theodorus. And the Council affirmeth concerning his Creed, that the Father of lies composed it. And it denounceth a Curse against both the Composer and the Believers of it. Yet doubtless these writings were in themselves inconsiderable enough. But the Council opposed them with such vigour, because the Faction had made them very popular, and advanced them into the Quality of a kind of Bible of the Party.

For Pope Honorius, he fell into the Heresie of the Monothelites. * That is of those who held that there is but one Will in both the Natures of Christ. This Doctrine he published in his Epistles. This was declared in the sixth general Council † in his Letters sent to Sergius of Constantinople, which the Fathers with unanimous consent, condemned to the Fire. He is anathematiz'd by the seventh Sy-

† Baron. Annal. A. 553. N. 48. ed. Colon. p. 486.

* Id. Ibid. N. 218. p. 419.

† Id. An. 553. N. 192. p. 511.

(a) Conc. Constantin. 2. Col. lar. 6.

(b) Desin. Conc. col. 3.

(c) Baron Annal. 553. N.

212. p. 417.

---Actumq; est
(ut apparet)
adversus Vigilius
constitutum, li-
cet præ revere-
rentia ipsius
non nomina
verint.

* Hist. mon. scrut. 5. p. 192. 193. Altera phrasis Honoriana longe diffici-
lior, minime tamen dissimulanda,
est ea, quod dicat aperte. Unde &
unam voluntatem fatemur dom.
nostri Jesu Christi.

† Syn. 6. act. 12, 13. See Richer.
Hist. Conc General. vol. 1. p. 369.
&c.

* Syn. 7. Aët. ult. p. 886. Con. in Labb. Richer. H. Conc. Gen. vol. 1. p. 658. Ad calc. ejusd. Aët. 7. in omn. editionibus Concil. legitur Epist. Synod. quam Tarasius, &c. — Et discrete narrat cunctos Patres — Honorium damnasse.

(a) Syn. oët. Alloc. 3.

* Breviar. Rom. Anni 1553. 3. Lett. in pervigil. SS. Pet. & Pauli v. not. in Cens. Hung. p. 13, 14.

(a) Lib. diurn. Pontif. Conf. fid. 2. p. 41. Autores vero novi hæretici dogmatis, Sergium, Pyrrhum, Paulum, & Petrum Episcopos, una cum Honorio (qui pravis eorum assertionibus fomentum impendit) pariterq; & Theodorum Pharamitanum, & Cyrum Alexandrinum, cum eorum imitatoribus, &c.

¶ Pref. ad l. Diurn. p. 3. Append. p. 174, 175, &c. 180, 187.

‡ Vind. P. Honor. p. 276. &c. p. 65, &c. p. 360, 400, 401. p. 317.

(b) Melch. Can. Loci com. L. 6. c. ult. p. 242. 243 &c.

nod * ; as also by Pope Adrian the Second, in the *Eighth* (a): And he was at first expressly anathematized for confirming the *Wicked Doctrine of Sergius*.

The guilt of *Hereſie* in *Honorius* is acknowledged in one Edition at least * of the *Roman Breviary*, where it is spoken in the praise of *Leo* the Second that he received that *Holy Synod*, — in which *Honorius*, *Pyrrhus*, *Sergius*, were condemned; and owned in the Solemn Profession of Faith made by the Popes at their entrance on the Papacy (a), as is manifest from the words in the *Liber Diurnus*. The Case is plain, but *Garnerius* and *Marchesius* have done their good wills to darken and perplex it. *Garnerius* the Jesuit maintains the Antiquity || of the *Liber Diurnus*, and the integrity of the Acts of the *Sixth Synod*; but he will not grant that *Honorius* was a *Monothelite*. *Marchesius* the Oratorian will not allow of the *Liber*

Diurnus tho it was collected betwixt the years 563 and 752, and the Character of the MSS. shew'd the book to be of venerable Age: He rejects the Acts of the *Sixth Synod* as corrupted: He suspects that some Impostor had a hand in the Acts of the *Seventh* †: He absolves *Honorius* from all manner of *Hereſie*: He took the first step false, when he believed that a Pope was infallible, and that caus'd him to err in all that follow'd; but this matter is so manifest, that *Melchior Canus* (b) professeth, no Sophistry is artful enough to put the Colour of a plausible

a plausible defence upon it. A late *Romanist* hath undertaken to write the *History* of the *Monothelites* (c); and the Defence of *Honorius* seemeth to be the principal motive to that undertaking. Yet so great is the power of Truth, and such, in this case, is the plainness of it, that in the Apologist himself, we find these concessions: That the Pope (a) was condemned by the Council, and that the Council was not to be blamed †; that Pope *Leo* the second owned both the Council and the Sentence, and that *Honorius* was Sentenced as an Heretick *. He would abate this guilt by saying (b) that *Honorius* erred as a private Person, and not as Head of the Church, because his *Epistle* was hortatory, and not compulsive. It is true, he erred not as Head of the Church, for such he was not, neither as such was he owned. But he erred as a publick person, and with Heretical obstinacy. For Pope *Leo*, as he noteth, said concerning him, that he had made it his business to betray and subvert the Holy Faith (c).

Now this matter of Fact sufficeth for the refuting all the fallacious reasonings of the patrons of Papal infallibility. For all must agree that they are not unerring Guides who actually err. The *Sieur de Balzac* (d) mocks at the weakness of one of the *Romish* Fathers, who offered four reasons to prove that the *Duke D'Espernon* was not returned out of *England*: And offered them to a Gentleman who had seen him since his return.

In order to the evading the force of these Reasonings, some of late have gone about to new mould the Controversie. They will not deny that Pope *Agatho* consented to the Condemnation of *Honorius*, that he was rightly condemn'd, that Popes are liable to Heresie ‖. They place the Infallibility of Church-Guidance in a General Council, joined with, and confirmed by the Bishop of the See Apostolick.

(c) *Hist. Mon*
Par. 1678.

(a) *Idem ibid*
p. 224, 225,
226.

† 218.
* *Idem* p. 220.
(b) P. 207,
208.

(c) *Idem* p. 122.
profana proditi-
one immacu-
latam fidem
subvertere co-
natus est —
Flammam
confouis, p.
123.

(d) *Socr.*
Christ. p. 40:

* See R. H.
of Church
Authority, p.
150.

To

Of a Guide in matters of Faith.

To this State of the Question, many things may be
 • said,

1. This is contrary to the belief of the *Jesuits*, who are a great part of the present governing *Roman Church*, and who in their late *Theses* in the *College of Clermont* maintained this Assertion *, 'That, in the Church of *Rome*, there was a Judge of Controversies in Faith, even without a *General Council*, both in Questions of Right and Fact.

* Dec. 12. A.
 1661. Datur
 in Eccl. Rom.
 Controv. fidei
 Judex etiam
 extra Concil.
 Gen. tum in
 Quest. juris,
 tum facti.

2. The *Roman See*, is not the only *See Apostolick*, neither did the Pope either Summon, or strictly speaking, confirm the *General Councils* most truly so call'd.

* *Bellar. de*
Concil. l. 1. c. 9.

3. *Bellarmino* himself teacheth * that one cause of the calling of a *General Council*, is a Suspicion of Heresie in the Pope. Now, is it probable that such a Pope should either call one, or having call'd it, confirm it against himself? And it seems, if he does not, it is not Authentick. It is true, a new Pope may be induc'd to call a Council, and to condemn a former one; but whilst the former Heretical Pastor lives, what a Guide have the Sheep?

* *V. Richer.*
de Eccl. &
Polit. Pot. c.
3. p. 38.

4. In *new Controversies*, Before a *General Council* be call'd and confirm'd by their *See Apostolick*, where is the Infallible Guide? The Precept of having a Pope has been held to be Affirmative, and not Negative *, and believed not to bind always. For the Church subsists after the Death of such a pretended Head, and during the Vacancy of any *See*, and after the Death of *Marcellinus*, the *See* was Vacant seven years. And whilst Popes live, they either will not, or cannot procure *General Councils* for many years; and what shall the unsatisfied do, during these Intervals? We are told that, in *new Controversies arising* *, and not formerly determin'd by such Councils, Church Guides may justly impose silence, till such Controversies shall be decided. But,

* *R. H. of*
Church Au-
thority, p.
150.

But, is this Imposition not as practicable in the *English*, as in the *Roman Church*? And all this while, where is the Infallibility? And who is it, that unerringly Guides their inward Faith, whilst present Authority governs their Manners?

After all this, these very men, who rely so much upon Councils, rely finally upon the Judgment of the Pope. For from him they take the Sense of the Council of *Trent*, which intrusted the Pope with the main of the Affair. From Popes, after the breaking up of the Council, they receive the Correction of the Copy of the Bible in the Vulgar Latin; the *Catechismus ad Parochos*, the correct Breviary, the Creed which contained their additional Articles. *Sixtus Quintus*, *Clemens Octavus*, *Pius Quartus*, are their Infallible Guides.

There seemeth no fitness in the constitution of such a Confid. V. Guide; nor any necessity for it.

Had it been agreeable to Gods Wisdom, his Wisdom would not have been wanting to it self. God having made Man a Reasonable Creature, would not make void the use of Deliberation, and the freedom of his Judgment. There is no vertue in the Assent, where the Eye is forced open, and the Light held directly to it. It is enough that God, the rewarder of them who believe, hath given Men sufficient faculties, and sufficient means.

And, seeing Holiness is as necessary to the pleasing of God, and to the peace of the World, as Union in Doctrine (to which there is too frequently given a lifeless Assent); seeing there must be Christian Obedience as long as there is a Church; seeing (as the *Guide in Controversy* * himself urgeth) the Catholick Church and all the parts of it are believed, in the Creed, to be Holy as well as Orthodox: We ask not the Romanists an imper-

inent

* R. H. Annor.
on D. St. Anf.
p. 81.

inent Question when we desire them to tell us why a means to Infallibility in the judgment, rather than irresistableness in the pious choice of the Will, is to be by Heaven provided in the Church? Both seem a kind of Destination of equal necessity.

* Jac. Alm lib.
de Auctor. Ec-
cles. cap. 10. p.
69. mirum est
quod Advers.
non asserunt
eum Impecca-
bilem, &c.

And this seems to have been the sense of *Jacobus Almain*, who wrote about the time of the appearing of *Luther*; for after having prov'd, as he conceived, that the Pope might err *judicially as well as personally, and in a matter of Faith as well as in other matters*; he concludes to this purpose, "It is a wonder that the Adversaries do not assert that the Pope is *Impeccable*; and I believe they would do so, if the daily Actions of Popes did not compel them to believe the contrary."

CHAP. VI.

The Fifth Proposition relating to the Ecclesiastical Guidance used by the Reformed.

Prop. V.

BUT though the *Reformed*, especially those of the *Church of England*, see no necessity for an infallible Guide, nor believe there is one on the face of the Earth, yet they do not reject all *Ecclesiastical Guidance*; but allow it great place in matters of Discipline and Order; and some place also (though not that of an unerring Judge) in Matters of Faith.

At the beginning of the Reformation, the *Protestants* though they refused the judgement of the Pope their Enemy, yet they declined not the determination of a Council. And, in the Assembly at *Ausburgh*, the *Romanists* and *Protestants* agreed in a Council as the *Umpire*

pire of their publick difference. At this the Pope was so alarumed (saith the *Sieur de Mezeray**) that he wrote to the Kings of *France* and *England*, "that he would do * *Hist. Fran. A. 1530.*
"all they would desire, provided they hindred the calling
"of a Council.

In the Reformation of the *Church of England* great regard was had to the Primitive Fathers and Councils. And the aforesaid *French Historian* was as much mistaken in the affairs of *Our Church*, when he said of our Religion, that it was a medly of the Opinions of Calvin and Luther (a), as he was afterwards in the affairs of our (a) *Mex. Hist. A. 1543.*
State, when he said King *James* was elected at the Guild-
hall King of *England* (b). (b) *Id. ib. A. 1603.*

The *Romanists* represent us very falsly, whilst they fix upon us a private Spirit, as it stands in opposition to the Authority of the Catholick Church.

Mr. *Alabaster* (c) expresseth one motive to his Conversion to the *Roman Church* in these Words: "Weigh (c) See 7. *Racsters 7 motives of W. A. p. 11, 12.*
"together the Spouse of Christ, with *Luther*, *Calvin*,
"Melancthon: Oecumenical Councils with private Opinions; The Reverend and Learned Fathers with *Arius*, *Aetius*, *Vigilantius*, Men always in their time
"Burned for Hereticks [of which words, the former are false reasoning, the latter are false History.] The Bishop of *Meaux* (d) reasons after the same fallacious (d) *Confer. avec M. Claude p. 110.*
manner, "Supposing a Protestant to be of this persuasion, that he can understand the Scriptures better than
"all the rest of the Church together; of which persuasion he saith very truly, that it exalteth Pride, and removeth Docility.

The *Guide in Controversies* (d) puts the Question (d) *R. H. Answer. not. on D. Sr. Answer. p. 84.*
wrong in these terms. "Whether a Protestant, in refusing the submission of his Judgment to the Authority or Infallibility of the Catholick Church in her
"Councils, can have, in several Articles of necessary
F "Faith,

"Faith, wherein the sense of Scripture is controverted, as sure a Foundation of his Faith, as he who submits his Judgment to the foresaid Authority, or also Infallibility? Here the Catholick Church is put in place of the *Roman*, Authority and Infallibility are joyned together; and it is suggested dishonestly concerning the Reformed, that they lay aside the Authority of the Catholick Church in her General Councils. Authority may be owned where there is no Infallibility; for it is not in Parents Natural or Civil: Yet both teach and govern us.

If others reject Church-Authority, let them who are guilty of such disorderly Irreverence, see to it. The Christians of the Church of *England* are of another Spirit. Of that Church this is one of the Articles:

Art. 20.

"The Church hath Power to decree Rites and Ceremonies, and Authority in Controversies of *Faith*. There is a Question (saith Mr. *Selden* *) about that Article concerning the Power of the Church, whether these Words [of having Power in Controversies of Faith] were not Stolen in. But, it's most certain, they were in the Book of Articles that was confirmed; though, in some Editions, they have been left out. They were so in Dr. *Mocker's*||; but he is to be considered in that Edition as a private Man. Now this

¶ Doct. & Pol. Eccl. Ang. A. 1617. p. 129.

Article does not make the Church an Infallible Guide in the Articles of Faith, but a Moderator in the Controversies about Faith. The Church doth not assume that Authority to it self in this Article which, in the foregoing *, it denied to the Churches of *Jerusalem*, *Alexandria*, *Antioch* and *Rome*. When perverse Men will raise such Controversies, who is so fit, for Peace sake, to interpose, as that Church where the Flame is kindled? There can be no Church without a Creed; and each particular Church ought to believe her Creed to be

true,

* Art. 19.

* Mr. *Selden* in his Colloquies; MS. in the word Church. Ser. 5.

true, and, by consequence, must exercise her Authority in the defence of presumed Truth. Otherwise she is not true to her own constitution. But still she acts under the caution given by St. *Augustine* (*a*),

" You bind a Man on Earth : Take heed they be just bonds in which you retain him. For Justice will break such as are unjust, in sunder. And whilest the Church of *England* challengeth this Authority, she doth not pretend to it from any supernatural gift of infallibility, but so far only as she believes she hath sincerely followed an infallible Rule. For of this importance are the next words of the Article before remembred.

" ——— It is not Lawful for the Church to ordain any thing that is contrary to Gods word written. " ——— And besides the same, it ought not to enforce any thing to be believed for necessity of Salvation (*b*).

After this manner the Church of *England* asserteth her own Authority ; and she runs not into any extrem about the Authority of Councils, or the Catholick Church.

We make Confession of the Ancient Faith expressed in the Apostolical, Nicene, or Constantinopolitan and Athanasian Creeds. The Canons of Forty, reject the Heresie of *Socinus* as contrary to the first four general Councils (*c*). Our very Statute-Book hath respect to them in the adjudging of Heresie (*d*). Yet our Church still teacheth concerning them (*e*), that " things by them

" ordained have neither Strength nor Authority, unless it may be declared that they be taken out of Holy Scripture.

When Controversies arise, especially when the doubts concern not so much the Article of Faith it self, as the Modes of it, we grant to such venerable Assemblies a Potiority of Judgment : Or if we assent not, yet for

(*a*) *S. Aug. de verb. Dom. super Mat. Ser. 16.*

(*c*) *Can. 5.*
(*d*) *1 Eliz. 1. Stat. 36.*
(*e*) *Art. 21.*

peace sake we are humbly silent: We do not altogether refuse their Umpirage. We think their Definitions good Arguments against unquiet Men who are chiefly moved by Authority. We believe them very useful in the Controversies betwixt us and the Church of *Rome*; and as often as they appeal to Primitive *Fathers* and *Councils*, to *Fathers* and *Councils* we are willing to go with them, and to be tryed by those who were nigher to the Apostles, in the Quality of *Witnesses* rather than *Judges*. We believe that in matters of Truth of which we are already perswaded, there may be added by the Suffrages of *Councils* and *Fathers*, a degree of Corroboration to our Assent. In sum, we say with St. *Austin* † that there is of *Councils* in the Church of God a most wholesome [tho not an infallible] Authority. And if S. *Gregory Nazianzen* never saw, as he saith, a happy effect of any (a) *Greg. Naz. Synod* (a), this came not to pass from the Nature of the means as not conducive to that end, but from the looseness of Government, and the depraved manners of the Age in which he lived: For such were the times of *Valens* the Emperor.

It is true, there are some among us, tho not of us, who with disdainful insolence, condemn all Authority; even that of the Sacred Scripture it self. These pretend to an infallible Light of immediate and personal Revelation. It hath hapned according to the Proverb, Every Man of them hath a Pope within him. *Henry Nicholas* puffed up many vain ignorant people with this proud Imagination. *Hetherington* a Mechanick, about the end of the Reign of King *James*, advanced this notion of Personal Infallibility. His followers believed they could not err in giving deliberate Sentence in Religion (a). And this was the principle of *Wynstanly* and the first Quakers, tho the Leaders, since they were embodied, have in part forsaken it.

But

† Ep. 118. Concil. in Eccl. Dei saluberrimam esse Auctoritatem.
(a) *Greg. Naz. Synod* (a),
Ep. 42, ad Procopium.

(a) See D. *Dennisons*
white Wolf.

But these Enthusiasts have intituled the Holy Spirit of God to their own Dreams. They have pretended to Revelations which are contrary to one another. They can be Guides to themselves only, because they cannot by any supernatural sign prove to others that they are inspired.

And such Enthusiasm is not otherwise favoured in the Church of *England* than by Christian pity, in consideration of the infirmity of Humane Nature; but in the Church of *Rome*, it hath been favoured to that Degree, that it hath (they say) founded many Orders and Religious Houses, and given Reputation to some Doctrines, and canoniz'd not a few Saints amongst them. The Inspiration of *S. Hildegardis*, *S. Catharine of Siena*, *S. Teresa*, and many others, seemeth to many to have been vapour making impression on a devout fancy: Yet the Church of *Rome* in a Council under *Leo the Tenth*, hath too much encouraged such distemper as prophesie*.

For *private Reason* it is the handmaid of Faith; we use it, and not separately from the Authority of the Church, but as a help in distinguishing true from false Authority. And in so plain a case as *Heresie*, if our Church thinketh a private Man may without an infallible Guide on Earth judge aright of it, it does but believe as *Pope Adrian the Second* believed†: for speaking of the Sentence against *Pope Honorius*, he excuseth it in point of good behaviour, because it was given in the case of *Heresie*. For in that case, and in that case alone, he allowed Inferiours (so he was pleased to call the *Oriental Bishops*) to reject the corrupt sense of those who are superior to them.

I will hasten to the next Proposition, after I have added one thing more which relates to the guidance of

* Conc. Lat. sess. 11. A. 1516, inter Labb. Conc. Max. p. 291. Caterum si quibusdam eorum Dominus futura quædam in Dei Ecclesia inspiratione quam rev elaverit, ut per Amos prophetam ipse promittit, & Paulus Ap. prædicatorum princeps Spiritum, inquit, nolite extinguere propbetas nolite spernere, hos aliorum fabulorum & mendacium gregi connumerari vel aliter impediri minime volumus. † Syn. 8. Alloc. 3. Licet enim Honorio post mortem Anathema sit dictum ab Orientalibus, sciendum tamen est quia fuerat super hæresi accusatus, propter quam solam licitum est minoribus majorum suorum moribus resistendi, vel pravorum sensus libere respuendi, &c.

Eccle-

Of a Guide in matters of Faith.

Ecclesiastical Authority : And it is this. Those of the Unlearned Laity who are Members of the Church of *England*, have much more of the just guidance of Ecclesiastical Authority than the like Order of Men in the Church of *Rome*. For the Authentick Books of that Church being all writren in the Latin Tongue, the illiterate People resolve their Faith into the ability and honesty of their Confessor or Parish Priest. They take it upon his word, that this is the Doctrine, this the Discipline, this the Worship of their Church. Whereas each Minister in our Church can direct the People to the Holy Bible, to the Books of Homilies, Articles, Canons, Common-Prayer, Ordination, as set forth in their native Tongue, by publick Authority. Of this they may be assured by their own Eyes, as many as can but competently read. They do not only take this from the mouth of a Priest, but from the Church it self. Where the Laws of the Church and the Statutes of the Civil Government are written in an unknown Tongue, there the unlearned depend more upon private than publick Authority ; for they receive the Law from particular Priests or Judges.

C H A P. VII.

Proposition the Sixth, concerning the Rule of Faith, the Holy Scripture, considered under Three Assertions.

T*Hough Ecclesiastical Authority be a help to our Prop. VI. Faith, yet the Holy Scripture is the only infallible rule of it; and by this Rule and the Ministerial Aids of the Christian Church, we have sufficient means without Submission to Papal Infallibility, to attain to certainty in that Faith which is gerneally necessary to Salvation.*

I do not mean that, by believing the whole Canon of the Scripture in gross, we thereby believe all the necessary Articles of the Faith, because they are therein contained. That looks too like a fallacy; and it giveth countenance to an useles Faith. For he that believes on this manner, hath as it were swallow'd a Creed in the lump only, whereas it is necessary for a Christian to know each particular Article and the general Nature and Tendency of it. Otherwise his Faith will not have a distinct influence upon his Christian behaviour, to which if it were not useful, it were not necessary. To believe in general as the Scriprure believes, is with the Blind and Flexible Faith of a *Romanist*, to believe at adventure. He believes as his Church believes, but he knows not what is the belief of his Church; and therefore is not instructed by that Faith to behave himself as a Member of it.

The Scripture is that rule of Faith which giveth us all the particular Articles which are necessary to eternal Life.

By

Of a Guide in matters of Faith.

By this rule the Primitive Fathers govern'd themselves, and this they commended to the Churches; and *Clemens Alexandrinus* (a) does in terms call the Consent of the Old and New Testament the Ecclesiastical Canon, and the Touchstone of true and false. I will not multiply Testimonies; enough of them are already collected (b).

(a) Cl. Alex.
Strom. 2. κα-
νὸν ἐκκλησι-
αστικὸν ἢ (κανο-
νικόν, ἔσθ' ὅτι
Strom. 7.

--ἀληθῶν καὶ
ἰσχυρῶν κει-
μένων.

(b) V. Davemant.
de Jure
c. 12. p. 53. ἔσθ' ὅτι
D. Till. Rule of
Faith, part 4.
sect. 2. p. 320.
ἔσθ' ὅτι.

I will rather pursue the Argument before me, in these three Assertions.

First, A Protestant without the submission of his Judgment to the Roman Church, may be certainly directed to the Canonical Books of Holy Scripture.

Secondly, He may without such submission, sufficiently understand the Rule of Faith, and find out the Sense of such places in those Canonical Books, as is necessary to the belief of a true Christian.

Thirdly, This rule of Faith is the principal means of Union in Faith in the Christian Church.

Assert. I. First, A Protestant without the submission of his Judgment to the Roman Church, may be certainly directed to the Holy Scriptures.

It is commonly said by men of the Roman persuasion, but injudiciously enough, That we may as well receive our Creed from them, as we do our Bible. The Scribes and Pharisees might have said the like to the People of the Jews. But with the good Text, they conveyed down to them a very false gloss, and misinterpreted the Prophecies, as meant of a pompous temporal Messiah. But, for the Reformed, they have received neither Creed nor Bible from the Church of Rome. The first enumeration of those Books they find in the Apostolical Canons, and in those of the Council of Laodicea; no Western Writings. They have received the Scriptures from the Universal Church of all Ages and Places, the Copies of them having been as widely dispersed as the Christians

ans themselves. And they receive them not from the infallibility of any particular Church, but upon the validity of this sure principle, That all the Christian World, so widely dispersed, could not possibly conspire in the imposing of false Books upon them.

For particular Churches, we may, of all others suspect the *Roman*, in reference to the Scriptures. For what sincerity of dealing may we hope for from such a Cabal of Men as has forged decrees of Councils and Popes, obtruded upon the World Apocryphal Books as Books Canonical, purged out of the writings of the Fathers some of the places which were contrary to their Innovations, depressed the Originals under an imperfect Latin Copy, and left on purpose in that Copy some places uncorrected for the serving of turns. For example sake, they have not either in the Bible of *Sixtus*, or in that of *Clement* (both which, though in War against each other, are made their ~~Canon~~) changed the word [*She*] in the third of *Genesis*, (*a*) For [*That*, or, *He*.] But, contrary to the *Hebrew* Text, to the Translation of the *Seventy*, to the Readings of the Fathers; they persist in rendring of it after this mannner; *She shall break thy head*. They believe this Reading tendeth most to the Honor of the blessed Virgin, whom they are too much inclined to exalt, in the quality of a Mother, above her Son. The *English* Translation of *Doway* hath followed this plain and partial corruption.

Secondly, A Protestant may without Submission of his judgment to the *Roman Church*, find out, in the Books of Holy Scripture, the necessary Articles of Christian Faith. *Assert. II.*

Two things are here supposed; and both of them are true.

Of a Guide in Matters of Faith.

First, That the Scriptures contain in them all the necessary Articles of our Faith.

Secondly, That the sense of the Words in which these Articles are expressed in Scripture, may be found out by a Protestant, without the Submission of his judgment to the Papacy.

First, The Scriptures contain in them all the necessary Articles of the Faith. This is true, if the Scriptures themselves be so: For this they Witness *. *St. Paul (b)* faith of the Old Testament, as expounded of Christ, that it was able to make a Man wise unto Salvation. Much more may this be affirmed of the entire Canon. The Apostles preached the necessities to Salvation, and what they had preached they wrote down *; concerning the manner of it, *Eusebius* may be consulted †. For the Primitive Fathers, they allowed the Scriptures to be a sufficient Rule. *Irenæus* said of them, they were perfect *; and of the words of *St. Austin* this is the sense; "Among those things which are plainly set down in Scripture, all those things are to be found which comprehend Faith and Good Manners. Nay the *Romanists* themselves attempt to prove their very additional Articles out of the Bible. That there are in it the Articles of the Apostolical Creed, is evident enough to a common Reader. But how the *Romish* Articles should be found in that Bible which was written some hundreds of years before they were invented, is a riddle beyond the skill of *Apollo*."

Secondly, The sense of the Scriptures, in matters necessary to Salvation, may be found out by Men of the Reformed Religion, without Submission to Roman Infallibility. The Learned know the Originals, and the true ways of Interpretation. And amongst us, those of the Episcopal Clergy have obliged the world with such

* See S. *Joh.*

20. 30, 31.

C. 21. 25.

(b) 2 *Tim.* 3.

15, 16, 17.

* *Iren.* 1. 3. c. 1

† *Euf. Hist.*

Ecel. 1. 2. c. 14.

* *Iren.* 1. 2. c. 1

47. S. *Aug. de*

107. *Christ.* 1.

2. c.

such an Edition of the Bible in many Languages, as was not before extant in the *Roman Church*. And a *Romanist* who writes with great mastery in such matters, prefers it before the great Bible of *Paris* (a.)

For those of the Laity who are Unlearned, they have before them a *Translation* which errs not in the Faith. And the phrases are not so obscure, but that, by study and Ministerial helps, they may understand them.

(a) V. P. S.
Hist. Critique
p. 583. --- Mais
elle est plus
ample & plus
commode, &c.

They have, before them, a *Translation* which errs not in the Faith. Of this the *Italians* and *French* may be convinced by comparing the *Translation* of *James de Voragine*, and the *Divines* of *Lovain*, with those of *Signor Diodati*, and *Olivet* or *Calvin*. And the *English* may receive satisfaction in this matter by comparing their *Translation* with that of *Doway*. In all of them they will find the same *Fundamental Doctrines* of Faith. And were there any such material alteration made in our Bible, it would appear by the notorious inconsistency of one part of the *Canon* with another: It would have been, long ago, detected, and exposed to publick shame, both by the *Romanists* and the other *Disfenters* from our *Communion*. But the former are not able to produce one instance; and the latter agree with us in the use and excellence of the *Translation*, tho in other things they extremely differ from us: And where they do but dream we err, they forbear not to proclaim it. Inasmuch that a difference in the *Translations* of the *Psalter* which concerns not Faith or Manners,† and a supposed defect in the *Table* for keeping *Easter*, have been made by them publick *Objections** and stumbling blocks in the way to their *Conformity*. It is true, there is a *Romanist* who hath raved against the Bible of the *Reformed*, in these extravagant words (a); The *Sectaries* have as many different Bibles, in *Canon*, Ver-

† See Hook.
Ecccl. Pol.
Book fifth.
Sect. 19.
* Mr. Hs.
peaceable de-
sign renewed.
p. 14.
(a) A. S. Re-
conciler of Re-
ligion, Printed.
1663. c. 11. p
38, 39.

" sion, and sense, as are days in the year. — The
 " Sectarian Bible is no more the Word of God than
 " the *Alchoran*, *Almanack*, or *Æsops Fables*. Of great
 corruption he speaks in general, but his madness has
 admitted of so much caution, that he forbears the men-
 tion of any one particular place.

The Learned *Romanists* understand much better, and
 the Ingenuous will confess it. And they are not ig-
 norant that we Translate from the Original Tongues,
 after having compared the Readings of the most Ancient
 Copies, and of the Fathers: Whilst they Translate the
 Bible from the *Vulgar Latin*, which, indeed, in the New
 Testament is a tolerable, but in the Old, a very imperfect
 Version. If our *English* Bible were turned into any
 one of the Modern Tongues by a Judicious *Romanist* who
 could keep Counsel, it would pass amongst many of
 that Church for a good Catholick Translation. And
 this is, the rather, my persuasion, because I have read,
 in Father Simon (a), that not unpleasant story con-
 cerning the Translation of Mr. Rene Benoist, a Doctor
 of the faculty of *Paris*. This Doctor had observed that
 a new Latin Translation of the *Organon* of *Aristotle*,
 performed by a person who understood not the *Greek*
 Tongue, had been very well received: Upon this occasion
 he was moved to turn the Bible into the *French* Tongue,
 though he was ignorant of those of the *Greek* and *He-
 brew*. For the accomplishing of this Design, he served
 himself upon the *French Translation of Geneva*; changing
 only a few words, and putting others of the same signifi-
 cation in their room. But, it seems, he was not exact
 enough in this change of words. For he having over-
 looked some words which were used by the *Genevians*
 and not the *Romanists*, a discovery was made by the
 Divines of *Paris*, and this Edition of the Bible was con-
 demned

(a) *Histoire
 Critique. Ch.
 25. p. 392, 393.*

deemed by them, though published under the name of one of their Brethren.

I do not say that such places of Scripture as contain Matters of Faith, are plain to every Man. But those who have a competence of capacity, who are not prejudiced against the Truth, who pray to God for his assistance, who attend to what they read, who use the Ministerial helps which are offered to them, shall find enough in Holy Writ to guide them to everlasting life. In finding out the sense of the Scriptures, the Church gives them help, but it does not by its Authority obtrude the sense upon them. The Guides of it are as Expositors and School-Masters to them: And by comparing phrase with phrase, and place with place, and by other such ways, they teach them how to judg of the meaning themselves. They give them light into the nature of the Doctrine, they do not require them to take it upon trust. They endeavour to open their understandings that they may themselves understand the Scriptures. And if they cannot themselves understand the Doctrine, it will be of little use to them in their lives. For they then believe in general that it is a necessary Truth; but what Truth it is, or for what ends it is necessary, they apprehend not. A Foolish Master in the *Mathematicks* may require his Scholars to take it upon his word that a Problem is demonstrated: But a wise and useful teacher will give them light into the manner of the demonstration, in such sort, that they themselves shall at last be able to judg that it is truly performed: And till they can do this, they are not instructed. St. Hierom relates it in praise of *Marcella* a Roman Lady (a), that

(a) S. Hieron.
in pref. ad
Comment. in
Epist. ad Galat.

— Ut scirem me non tam Discipulam habere quam judicem v. Psalm 119. 99.

the

Of a Guide in Matters of Faith.

she would not receive any thing from him after the *Pythagorean* manner, or upon bare Authority. She would with such care examine all things, that *She seemed to him, not so much his Scholar as his Judg.*

It is certain that there are great depths and obscure Mysteries in the Holy Bible. But the Doctrines of Christian Faith are to the sincere and industrious and such as wait on God in the way of the Reformed Church, sufficiently plain. But to the Idle, the prejudiced, the captious, Light it self is Darknefs.

The *Romanists* affright with this pretence of obscurity and profoundness; as if we must not adventure into any part of the Waters, because in some places we may go beyond our depth. If there are hard and difficult places which the *Unstable wrest*; who required their meanness to make a judgment of that for which they might perceive themselves to be insufficient? But whilst *St. Peter* speaketh of some few places in *St. Pauls* writings which are obscure, he does at the same time suppose many others to be plain enough for the capacities of the Unlearned. And if they be evil Men, though very Learned, they will wrest the plainest places; and (as some did in *St. Hierons* * days) they will draw violently to their private sense a Text of Scripture which is incongruously, and with reluctance applied to it.

* *S. Hieron. in Ep. ad Paulin. ad sensum suum incongrua aptant Testimonia*
— *Et ad voluntatem suam S. Scripturam repugnantem trahunt.*

It is true all Sects of Christians cite the Scriptures; but that does not prove the obscurity of those Sacred writings: It rather shews the Partiality, Boldness, and Sophistry of those who alledge them. All Laws are obscure if this Argument hath force in it. For every Man, in his own case, has the Law on his side. Men take up their opinions and Heresies from other reasons; and then, because the name of Scripture is venerable, they

they rake into the several Books of it, and they bend and torture places, and force them on their side by unnatural construction. So do the *Socinians*, producing all the niceties of Grammar and Criticism in a matter of Faith. Yet the Guide in Controversies (a) useth it as an Argument against the plainness of this Rule of Faith, that the *Socinians* cite the Holy Scriptures in favour of their Heresie. But is not this Argument two-edged? And will it not cut as well on the other side, and do Execution against the words of Fathers and Councils, and the Apostolical Creed it self? For the *Socinians* (those especially who are turned *Arians*) since *Petavius* hath furnished them with Quotations, will cite the writings of the Ancients: And *Slichtingius*, a mere *Socinian**, hath expounded every Article of the Creed in a sense agreeable to the Heresie of his Master.

(a) R. H. Guide, &c. Disc. A. p. 375, 376, 377, 378, &c.

* V. Confess. fid. Christ. ed. nom. Eccles. Polon. &c.

But if the Scriptures were so obscure in necessary matters, what remedy would be administred by the *Roman Church*? They cannot offer to us any Ancient, infallible Exposition. What the Ancients have said, the Reformed generally understand much better than some Popes, who its said could scarce read the Holy Gospel in Latin. For the Fathers of the earliest Ages, they were more busied in writing against Heresies, than in explaining of Scripture. Nor, to this day hath the *Roman Church* given any Authentick Collection of Expositions, either of the Ancients, or of her own. And if we must go to any Church for a Comment on the Scriptures, I know no reason why it should be to that of *Rome*, where worldly Polity and Interest have so great an hand in the Interpretation. Had not they governed themselves by this art, we should not have found in the writings of their Popes, and in the very Canon

Canon Law it self, those words which were spoken to
 Jeremiab expounded of the Supremacy of the Bishop
 of Rome "(a) I have set thee over Kings, to root out,
 (a) V. Innoc. 3. in decret. "to pluck up, and to destroy. (b) The Donatists found
 Greg. l. 1. tit. their Church in these words of the Canticles, "Tell me
 33. c. 6. Greg. " (thou whom my Soul loveth) where thou feedest; where
 7. Ep. l. 8. Ep. Major Obed. "thou makest thy Flock to rest at noon. For they ex-
 21. Extrav. de c. 1. P. Pi. 5. pounded this (as it liked them best) of the Flock of
 in Bulla Cont. R. Eliz. in their party in the Southern Country of Africa. Such
 Camd. Annal. Expounders of Scripture are those Popish Writers, who
 A. 1570. interpret [Feed my Sheep] of the Universal Monar-
 (b) Jerem. 1. chy of the Bishop of Rome, and conclude that a Pa-
 10. stor must drive away Wolves, or depose Princes hurt-
 ful to the Church. "But the straining of such Meta-
 phorical expressions (as an excellent Person * saith)
 "proves only that they want better proofs. And by
 "a like way of interpretation, from the same Text it
 "might be concluded that all Christians are Fools be-
 "cause Sheep are silly Creatures.

* D. Falkner
 in Christ. Loy.
 p. 315.

No Expositions are more besides the sense of the
 Text, more forc'd, or farther fetch'd, than some of those
 which may be found in the Authentick Books of the
 Roman Church : and those who compos'd them appear
 to have looked askint on the Scriptures. For whilst
 they looked on them, they seem'd to have looked ano-
 ther way. I will instance only in a few of those ma-
 ny odd Expositions with which the Roman Breviary
 abounds

The words of the Angel to the Holy Virgin [a
 Sword shall go through thine own Soul also] are (a) in-
 (a) Domin. in- fra Octav. Na- tiv. in 2. no- tturno Lect. 8. terpreted of that word of God which is quick and power-
 p. 175. ful, and sharper than any two-edged Sword. And this
 sense is designed as an evasion of their reasoning, who
 from that Text conclude concerning the Blessed Virgin
 that

that she died, and was not miraculously assumed. The Ascension of *Elias* is thus expounded (b), "He was taken up into the aerial, not the ætherial, Heavens ; from whence he was dropped in an obscure place on Earth, there to remain to the end of the World, and to expire with it. They say † of *Job*, " That when he spake of a *Bird*, and of her path in the Air, he by a figure called Christ a Bird, and by the motion of it in the Air, figured also our Lords Ascension.

(b) *Dom infra*
Oct. Asc. in 3.
Noct. p. 443.

† *Infra. Oct.*
Asc. 3. Noct.
Leit. 8. p. 447.

We may perceive by these few Instances, what an entrance into the sense of Scripture is like to be given by such Interpreters.

Thirdly, *If Men would use the Church as their Ministerial Guide, and admit of the Scripture as the only Rule by which all Matters of Faith are to be measured, they would agree in the proper means to the blessed end of Unity in the Faith.* This was the persuasion of

Affert. III

St. *Austin*, who thus applieth himself to *Maximus* * ; " Neither ought I at this time to alledg the Council of *Nice*, nor you that of *Ariminum* : For neither am I bound to the Authority of the one, nor you to that of the other. Let us both dispute with the Authorities of Scripture, which are Witnesses common to both of us.

* *S. Aug. Cont.*
Max. l. 3.

Whilst the *Romanists* ascribe the differences which arise amongst the *Reformed* to their want of an infallible Guide, and to their different interpretations of the Scriptures, they unskilfully derive effects from causes which are not the natural Parents of them. There is (saith St. *Austin*) one Mother of all strifes, and she is *Pride*. Neither doth the Scripture divide us, nor does the infallibility of their Judge unite them. Their Union (such as it is) ariseth from the mighty force of their External Polity ; and they speak not different-

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Of a Guide in matters of Faith.

ly because they dare not ; and the strength of that Polity arose at first from *Rome*, not as the Chair of *St. Peter*, but as the Seat of the Empire. Our divisions like theirs, arise (as all Wars do, be they Ecclesiastical or Civil) from the unruly Lusts and Passions of Men. And from these likewise , arise generally the misinterpretations of plain Laws , and Rules; the sense of which must be made to chime according to the Interest of prejudiced Men, or else they will not give attention to them. If the Lusts and Passions of Men were mortified , all Christians agreeing in the certainty of the Scriptures, though not of any Living Guide; and the words of the one being as intelligible as those of the other; all might agree in one Creed, and put an end to those unnecessary Controversies which entangle Truth, and extinguish Charity.

 ERRATA sic Corrigenda.

Page 7. l. 11. read be. p. 13. l. 2. in the marg. r. 1 Cor. 9. 2. --- Id. l. 6. r. 50. p. 18. l. 27. r. Exarchate. p. 24. l. 17. r. Charge. p. 39. r. Chap. VII. p. 40. l. 5. r. Touchstone l. 30. r. Church in the Marg. l. 7. r. *ἐκκλησία*. p. 43. in the Marg. l. 13. renewed.

FINIS.

